

**Gulf of Mexico Alliance  
Environmental Education Network  
Underserved and Underrepresented Populations Working Group**

**Conference Call 02/01/07**

**Work Group Attendees:**

Facilitator: Lee Yokel, GOMA Environmental Education Coordinator; lyokel@disl.org  
Diane Austin, Bureau of Applied Res. in Anthropology, Univ. of Arizona; daustin@u.arizona.edu  
Olivia Aguilar, Dept. of Natural Resources, Cornell University; oma3@cornell.edu  
Bryan Fluech, FL Sea Grant; fluech@ufl.edu  
Jennifer Buchanan, Grand Bay NERR; jen.buchanan@dmr.ms.gov  
Greg Ira, FL Department of Environmental Protection; greg.ira@dep.state.fl.us  
Julie Morgan, USACE; julie.t.morgan@mvn02.usace.army.mil  
Richard Gonzales, Gulf of Mexico Foundation; richard@gulfmex.org  
Tara Shultz, Texas State Aquarium; tschultz@txstateaq.org  
Charlotte Runnels, EPA Environmental Justice Region VI, Runnels.Charlotte@epamail.epa.gov

**Current Homework**

1. Continue Work: Draft Comprehensive UUP Definition  
Continue to work on definition with Susan Bergeron. Charlotte Runnels will forward any information she obtains to Lee Yokel.
2. Continue Partnership Spreadsheet Development  
Expand spreadsheet to key faith based organization leaders and home school organizations in local communities. All participants are to forward information to Lee Yokel.
3. Survey Development Continued  
Lee Yokel will continue to work with Richard Gonzales and Richard Makopondo.
4. Spreadsheet for Funding Development  
Lee Yokel will generate key headers to begin addressing resources for future pilot programs and circulate among UUP Working Group.

**Underserved and Underrepresented Definitions**

Continued discussion was held regarding various definitions for agencies. For example the Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection does not have one. Charlotte Runnels - EPA Region VI Environmental Justice Program – was very knowledgeable on what federal agencies have been mandated to do. She noted that each agency had liaisons in the various communities with a federal executive board which convened in Kansas City in the 1990s. She would attempt to find additional information to support this effort. Ms. Runnels referenced a Presidential Executive Order from the Clinton administration in 1994 which stated all federal agencies must address Environmental Justice. This would include vulnerable agencies. Lee Yokel would forward to Charlotte materials developed to date.

## **How Diverse is the GOMA Partnership**

A good dialog continued from the last call regarding organizations that were being reviewed for possible UUP connections. In this discussion, the group addressed other audiences such as the Department of Education and non-profits such as community and religious organizations (request from last time). It was felt that addressing faith-based groups was now safe territory given the Bush Administrations' support of such organizations. It was noted that volunteers would look for key community leaders of faith-based groups to add to the developing spreadsheet of contacts.

Jennifer Buchanan noted that the Grand Bay NERR was developing a stewardship activity for faith based groups which would include outdoor ethics in stewardship. The activity would be non-denominational in nature, a possible lesson plan for Sunday school, and designed such that they can insert their own messages. The activity will be piloted for feedback and then released after a known success. The topic is for litter and marine debris. Once the program is approved it will be available to everyone.

Diane Austin noted that there was an international movement starting in the 1990s to expand the six basic Catholic principles into seven to allow for creation [environment]. This has subsequently expanded across all denominations with a number of initiatives of religious focus. Diane offered to submit this resource base to Lee Yokel. It was also noted that coastal Louisiana is integrating environmental messages into rebuilding information with faith-based groups.

In order to be successful, the group noted that it must consider quality of life and integrate this into environmentalism in existing programs. Environmental justice leagues are doing some of this. Other groups attempting to reach UUPs include watershed forums also working with these groups.

Other notes from the discussion:

- A question was raised as to how NRCS defines a UUP and how do they work with those communities?
- Derrick Evans – Turkey Creek Keepers – MS – Minority block community, environmental and religious group in Gulf Port, MS is very successful.
- Home School Organizations? Can also do a lot regarding environmental issues; can have their own network – have we identified them?
- Concern need to have our definition down – need to be careful of broadness, get back to a focus. Need this in conjunction with the survey.
- Survey will help us focus our next step before we go to other decisions

## **Survey**

As the survey is developed, this Working Group will serve as the “guinea pigs” for refining and testing the tool. The survey will be issued via Survey Monkey through email only. Thus making email contacts very important with the selected groups. NOAA CSC center was suggested as a helpful resource for reviewing a draft survey as well as working with Dr. Makopondo.

There was a brief discussion about how do we target populations for survey? It was suggested that a list of possible funding sources as a carrot to respond maybe useful. The idea being if you fill out the survey you get a list of funding resources in return.

## **Funding Issues**

A brief discussion was held regarding how to fund the ultimate goal of a pilot project. This discussion was an agenda item from the previous call.

It was discussed that the group needed to investigate options and create spreadsheet of resources. There was a suggestion to include this in the survey to find out where people are getting their funding.

There was a general question posing what others - the CIA, CMP, NSF, private sources, Dept. of Edu., various state and federal level agencies – what support they provide.

A brief discussion covered how the group needs to look at how environmentalism crosses many areas such as workforce labor development, scientific and technical job shortages, and living and working in the coastal zone. An integrated approach with other disciplines to accomplish what we want is needed.

The question was posed what about going through industry or corporate sponsor such as Subaru's leave no trace program. Major companies have foundations that can co-sponsor and fund grant programs (i.e. Home Depot, Chevron, Power Companies, etc). The group needs to be creative.

Richard Gonzales noted the connections that need to be made with work force development and youth. This supports the development a workforce with training such has how to do organic farming. While students may not pursue that career they are learning about a lot of things and do local projects; related to soft skills which are needed in the workplace.

Corporations have similar objectives and heard from a lot of groups about wetlands as there is a need to replace the work force. Environmental education needs to address new values and agendas to integrate things into quality of life with living and working in the coastal zone.

There is a need to list workforce grants to see what they are funding and how they target at risk youth.

## **Other Topics**

Lee Yokel reported that the Steering Committee was considering a Network meeting for May or June. The group preferred later June.

Jennifer Buchanan noted she had a couple of spots left in her Leave No Trace train the trainer workshop at the Grand Bay NERR.

## **Call Schedule**

The next call is scheduled for March 8, 2007, 10:00 AM CST.

**Goal – “Develop and host a pilot program to engage underrepresented and underserved communities in Gulf stewardship activities related to the Alliance strategic priorities.”**